



Board of Barbering & Cosmetology

Chemical Hair Care Services Fact Sheet

August 2004

CONSUMER INFORMATION SHEET

What are chemical hair care services?

- Chemical hair services include permanent waving, straightening, and hair lightening or coloring. The services all cause permanent changes to the hair.

Who is licensed to perform these services?

- In California, only state-licensed cosmetologists and barbers in state-licensed salons or barbershops may legally perform chemical hair care services. As of August 2004, there were more than 206,000 licensed cosmetologists and more than 17,000 licensed barbers in the state.

What should I do if my hair isn't in the best condition?

- The first thing you should consider is asking the operator to do a pretest.

What are the different pretests?

- For permanent wave services, a preliminary test curl may be done. This type of test will help determine how the hair will react to a permanent. It is usually done on tinted, bleached, or overporous hair, or on hair that shows signs of damage. A test curl also indicates actual processing time and curl results based on rod size and the product used.
- For color services, the operator may perform a strand test. This pretest is given before the treatment to determine development time, color result, and the ability of the hair to withstand the effects of chemicals.
- If your hair is color-treated, or if you are visiting a new operator, ask for a strand test to ensure the quality of the service, and that you'll get your desired result.
- If the product is an aniline derivative (which includes all permanent haircoloring), the FDA requires a predisposition test (also known as a "patch test").
- A predisposition test involves applying a small amount of the product to your skin to determine if you may be sensitive to the chemicals. Nearly all manufacturers of chemical products recommend that a predisposition test be performed 24

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hours before the desired chemical service to determine whether or not the client could be allergic to the product.

- If there is a charge for a consultation or pretest, be sure to ask in advance.

How am I protected during the procedure?

- For all chemical hair services, a towel and/or other sanitary neck strip must be used to keep the full-length protective covering (i.e., shampoo cape, drape, smock, etc.) from coming in direct contact with a client's skin.
- The towel will also protect the client from solution that may drip during the service. (The operator may also spread petroleum jelly on the skin to help protect it.)
- The towel must be changed frequently. If it is too wet, it cannot absorb more liquids. If it has absorbed chemical drips, prolonged exposure to it can burn your skin.

What happens if the chemical solution gets on me?

- The chemical solution must be removed from the skin immediately on contact.
- If you feel chemicals dripping on your skin or any burning sensation, you should immediately inform the operator.

Can the strong odor hurt me?

- Although some chemicals may have strong odors, they should not cause you discomfort.
- Salons and barbershops should have adequate ventilation to keep the odors from lingering. If the chemical odor causes you any discomfort, immediately inform the operator.

Why do I have to wait before shampooing my hair?

- Because the chemical application causes a change to your hair, it is imperative that the hair be allowed to adjust before it is shampooed.
- Listen to your cosmetologist's or barber's advice to wait so many days (or hours) before you shampoo or use any hot implements on your hair. Otherwise you could severely damage it.